



# superconnected

THE INTERNET, DIGITAL MEDIA &  
TECHNO-SOCIAL LIFE, 2ND EDITION  
MARY CHAYKO

## 1. SUPERCONNECTEDNESS

# SUPERCONNECTEDNESS

Our societies are *superconnected*, and so are we—never in human history have so many been connected to so many others, in so many ways, with such wide-ranging social implications.

This book explores these implications with respect to a wide range of topics from a variety of perspectives and disciplines.



Image Source: [www.cisco.com](http://www.cisco.com)



# BUT COMPUTER-ENABLED CONNECTEDNESS HAS ITS LIMITS...



Image Source: [magic.piktochart.com](http://magic.piktochart.com)

There are places in the world, including much of southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, in which internet access, computers, and even electricity are seriously scarce.

Although cell phones have penetrated the developing world to a much greater extent than computers have, they are used in fairly limited ways, and users are hindered by inconsistent internet access, unreliable service, and difficulty charging their phones.

# SOCIAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT INTERNET CONNECTEDNESS

Socioeconomic  
status

Educational  
Background

Race

Ethnicity

Gender

and more...

# MODERN LIFE, INTERNET AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Internet and digital media have become embedded in nearly every facet of modern life, including cities, cars, home appliances, lighting and heating products, and health and lifestyle monitoring.

This is sometimes called the “Internet of Things” or the “Outernet.” A traditional computer is not always required!



Image Source: [www.dreamstime.com](http://www.dreamstime.com)

# THE INTERNET...

The internet is a global network of circuits, tubes, and packets of data that connect countless billions of computerized devices and, thus, the people that use these devices.

The web is a system of hyperlinked pages and documents that exists *on* the internet.

Though often spoken of interchangeably, the internet and the web are not the same thing!



Image Source: seeklogo.com



# ...FACILITATES SUPERCONNECTEDNESS

Using internet services, people find one another, learn about one another, exchange information and social support, work, play, and become connected, so copiously and completely that we can say they become *superconnected*.

Some use the term “hyper-connected.” The author (Prof. Mary Chayko) prefers the term “superconnected,” as the prefix “hyper” can imply that the connectedness generated in internet and digital media use is extreme and problematic – which it may or not be.



Image Source: freepik.com

# COMPUTERIZATION & COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC)

Computerization is required for these operations to work and for smaller networks to detect one another and become interlinked.

Many types and sizes of computers work through many types of devices. Cell phones and smartphones are really best thought of as tiny computers that enable digitized, portable, near-constant communication.



Image Source: [conceptdraw.com](http://conceptdraw.com)



# CELLULAR AND SATELLITE NETWORKS IN COMMUNICATION

Some communications exchanged on mobile devices, such as texting, gaming, and instant messaging via SMS, are facilitated by cellular and satellite networks rather than the actual internet. That is, these networks may not technically be part of the internet.

But as they are digitized and serve to connect people, they contribute in a major way to techno-social life, and will therefore be examined in this book alongside internet and digital/social media applications.

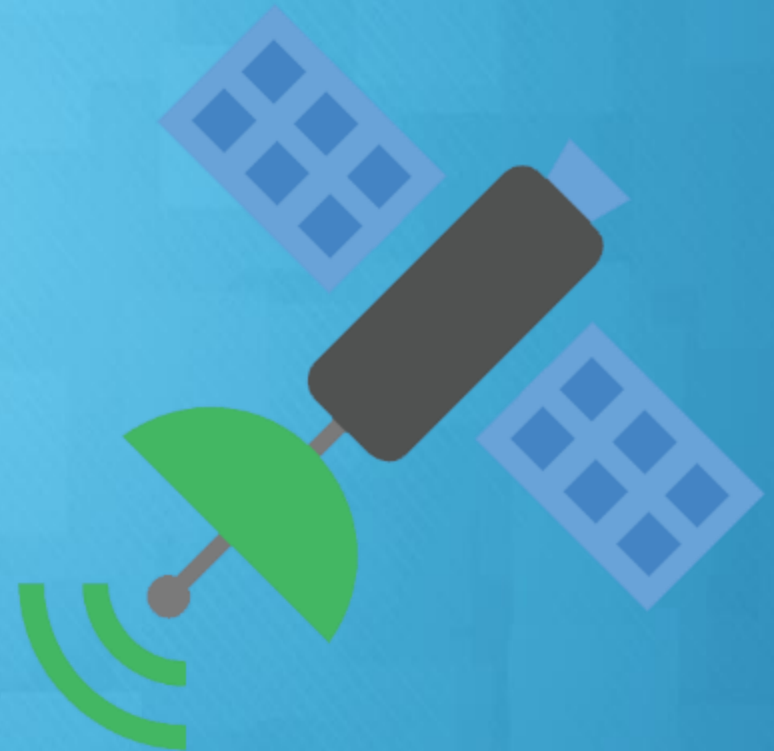


Image Source: [conceptdraw.com](http://conceptdraw.com)

# DIGITAL MEDIA...

Media are considered to be digital when data are communicated via computerized networks in bursts of invisible energy (bits).

As information is digitized, countless bits of data are represented and stored by computers as digits—zeroes (representing “off”) and ones (representing “on”)



Image Source: [static3.depositphotos.com](https://static3.depositphotos.com)

# ...ALSO FACILITATES SUPERCONNECTEDNESS

As technology advances to create more and more ways for people to become connected and to impact the world around them, a full complement of technologically enabled activities has transformed everyday life.

Even people who do not personally go online much (or ever) or who do not use social media have had their lives changed dramatically by the global internet, digital media, and mobile media revolution.



Image Source: [Livingwithtech.wikispaces.com](http://Livingwithtech.wikispaces.com)



# TECHNOLOGY

A technology is the process or technique of making something that allows human beings to share their knowledge, perform a task, or fulfill a function. It can also be thought of as a tool or invention that, once created and used, is intended to solve a problem or improve on past understandings of how to do something.

Technologies are not necessarily digital or electronic. A pencil and paper can both be considered technologies.



Image Source: dreamstime.com

# TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

This is the tendency to “blame the technology” itself when something goes wrong when it is used.

People design and create technology and people use it (though not in a vacuum – there are always issues of power to be taken into account).

It is not useful or accurate to think of technology as an entity doing something *to* people and then to blame the technology when things go wrong or get complicated.

It is frequently useful, though, to ask who benefits from a technology and who is left behind or left out when it is used.



Image Source: Pixabay

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Technology reflects and often advances the interests of those who create it and fund it.

It is not neutral—it is not *just* a thing or a tool—but something that can disproportionately benefit those who make it, profit from it, or control its use.

The invention and use of technology related to forces like political power, social class differences, and organizational dynamics is called the *social constructivist* approach to the study of technology.



Image Source: [us.123rf.com](http://us.123rf.com)



# TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIATION



Image Source: Vexels

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) carry ideas and information from one person to another.

When this process occurs, it is called mediation or *technological mediation*, and the technology itself can be considered a *mediator*.

# SOCIALITY AND TECHNO-SOCIAL LIFE

People's tendency to form connections and bonds with one another, and to live life in concert with others, is called *sociality*.

It is not necessary to be physically face-to-face with another person for sociality to develop.

Our lives are highly social and strongly influenced by technology. They are *techno-social*, with both parts of the word (“techno” and “social”) equally important.



Image Source: [williamstechlab.wikispaces.com](http://williamstechlab.wikispaces.com)

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